

January 12, 2010

Commission on the Environment  
11 Grove Street  
San Francisco, CA  
94102

To the Search Committee,

I am excited to put forward my application for Director of the San Francisco Department of the Environment. In my 17 year tenure as a director of environmental programs for both the City of Santa Monica and the City of San Francisco, I have interfaced effectively with elected officials, crafted internationally recognized policies, implemented successful programs, and provided strong leadership to staff working within my teams. The Integrated Pest Management Program is now mirrored in cities across the country and has become the basis for the LEED certification program for commercial and residential construction across the world. San Francisco's Precautionary Principle Policy gained international recognition and has provided the underlying guidance for all the City's environmental legislation. Initiatives addressing toxic chemicals in toys, developing stringent Green Business standards, and creating environmental requirements in the Building Code are all further examples of my capacity to develop effective, progressive, and far-reaching policies and programs.

The key to the success of San Francisco's environmental legacy is the strength of the four pillars of the "civil society partnership": dedicated and competent City staff, an engaged public with strong NGO participation, a supportive business community, and bold elected officials. As Department Head it will be my mission to build and nurture the capacity of each of the pillars. My track record over the past 17 years has demonstrated my unique ability to work closely with each sector, to find the "win", and to build the necessary bridges that strengthen the whole. Another unique strength of San Francisco is the Commission on the Environment. This body traditionally serves as the focal point for the four pillars. I have a long and productive history with the Commission understand the importance of strengthening and deepening the bond between the Commission and the Department.

As my resume will show, I am very familiar with the legislative process at the City and State levels and have worked closely with elected officials across California to craft laws that are both visionary and pragmatic. I have testified in numerous hearings and have been called upon by legislators to serve in a leadership role on policy taskforces, technical panels, as well as local, regional and statewide working groups.

San Francisco's Department of the Environment receives a large proportion of its funding from a set-aside account (called the Impound Account) that is a part of the citywide garbage collection contract set every five years. I played a leadership role in the last rate setting process and this experience will be of great value as the City prepares itself for the upcoming rate process set to begin at the end of 2010. I have also been very active in the budget process for the department and directly manage a program budget of \$6 million. In addition, I am responsible for developing environmental policies affecting the entire \$600 million commodities budget for City purchases.

I am a committed manager who believes strongly in professional development and staff training. Mastering skills in public speaking, meeting facilitation, grant writing, and problem solving are essential to the success of the Department and the ability of staff to craft and implement the model programs we have come to expect. As Department Head I will foster staff development, emphasize training, and implement 360-degree performance evaluation.

San Francisco is uniquely positioned to lead the nation in environmental protection. We have a responsibility to ensure this protection applies to all our residents no matter what their address or income. The Department of the Environment will need to redefine its relationship to the Environmental Justice community as we move forward. Job creation and local empowerment are themes that must be accentuated. The Department has made great strides in this area but there is still a long way to go. While we have grown from a department of 4 to 70, our mission has not changed, the passion and commitment of the staff is stronger than ever.

The City demands that our initiatives affect real change, our planet depends on it. I am ready and excited to work closely along side the Commission and to lead the Department.

Sincerely,

Debbie Raphael

